



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Our author says himself that there are not "startling general conclusions in regard to Molière's use of *tu* and *vous*." He has neither proved nor disproved the statement of Schliebitz and has added very little incidental information to our knowledge of Molière's usage. A better method would be to study the psychology of individual cases, treat the plays chronologically, and submit the numerical evidence of the use of *tu* and *vous*. Basing the study on such factors is the only way to show the truth or falsity of Schliebitz's theory and hence to discover if there is any change from contemporary usage in Molière's plays. This still remains to be done.

EDWARD H. SIRICH.

University of Minnesota.

Anthony Aston, Stroller and Adventurer, by WATSON NICHOLSON, Ph. D. Published by the Author. South Haven, Michigan, 1920. 98 pp.

Dr. Nicholson's book concerns itself with one of the lesser figures of the eighteenth century stage, who has hitherto, even to most close students of the period, been scarcely more than a name. But the real interest and significance that are seen to adhere to the unconventional person of Anthony Aston fully justify this small volume, in which is assembled all the available material on that engaging farceur and soldier of fortune.

The main basis of the biographical study, which occupies the first half of the brochure, is the extremely rare "Sketch of the Life, &c. of Mr. Anthony Aston, Commonly call'd Tony Aston. Written by Himself," which Dr. Nicholson, in 1914, came upon in the British Museum appended to *The Fool's Opera*, a slender dramatic piece by Aston, written under the pseudonym of Mat. Medley.

Unfortunately Dr. Nicholson's elation over his find betrayed him into grave indiscretion. He says (p. 7) "It appeared in no library catalogue that I had ever seen," and later (p. 42) "The British Museum probably possesses the only copy in existence. It is the only authoritative account of the life of Anthony Aston thus far unearthed, and its existence was not suspected until I discovered it a few years ago."

As a matter of fact, the full title appears under Aston's name in the British Museum Catalogue. Moreover, this is not the sole extant copy, nor is Dr. Nicholson the first to employ the *Sketch* for purposes of research. In 1896 Judge Charles P. Daly, in his *First Theatre in America*¹ (p. 19), refers briefly to a copy of this little book owned by Mr. Thomas J. McKee of New York, who was then preparing a paper (never completed owing to his death) on Aston's career, for the Dunlap Society. A third copy of Aston's work is now to be found in the Library of Congress.

Extensive use of the pamphlet was made by Mr. O. G. Sonneck in *Early Opera in America*² (pp. 4-8), the first part of which was reprinted practically intact from the *New Music Review* of June to August, 1907, where it originally appeared. On the basis of the *Sketch* Mr. Sonneck first dated accurately the introduction of professional acting into America. He quotes three extracts bearing on Aston's experiences in this country.

Unhappily for his confident claims, then, Dr. Nicholson was by no means the discoverer of a unique and hitherto unknown copy of the player's autobiography. Nevertheless he has done a good service in making the Aston material accessible. After the biographical study, attractively written and sound in its research, are added three reprints: the *Sketch*, W. R. Chetwood's short anecdotes concerning Aston from *A General History of the Stage* (1749), and Aston's *Brief Supplement* to Colley Cibber's *Apology*, which contains several autobiographical references. Thus the book includes probably everything that is known about the life of this intriguing if humble follower of Thespis.

Tony's activities, however, were by no means confined to the stage. Starting his career at the end of the seventeenth century as a student of law, he soon renounced the Inns of Court for Drury Lane, but shortly he left London and took to the road with a strolling company. Then the army beckoned, and he sailed for Jamaica to fight against the French and Spanish. In the new world his life was a succession of adventures. Shipwrecked on the coast of South Carolina, he proceeded to Charleston, where for a time in 1703 he "turned player and poet," and gave to America

¹ Published in New York by the Dunlap Society.

² Published by G. Schirmer, 1915. Mr. Sonneck was at that time Chief of the Division of Music, Library of Congress.

its first sight of professional acting. The winter of 1703-4 was spent in the further pursuit of his vocation in New York. On his return home, he re-entered, perhaps after a brief participation in the expedition to Portugal, the ranks of the strollers, and at the head of his own small company, consisting chiefly of his wife and son, with a repertoire of scraps from other men's plays and tags of his own invention, he spent the remainder of his life³ peddling his wares throughout England and even into Scotland and Ireland—the remainder except for brief intervals when the offices of tapster and publican seem to have engaged his talents. Fame he gained if not fortune; Chetwood declared that he "is as well known in every Town as the Post-Horse that carries the Mail."

Mr. Nicholson's account is of value not only as a record of Aston's career but as an illustration of the shifts and subterfuges that early eighteenth century strollers resorted to in the struggle to maintain themselves by their crude and lowly ministration. Tony himself, among the most competent of his caste, was an imitator and wag but in no sense an original comedian. What he lacked in application and art he made up for in versatility, coarseness and boast.

Aston's two known plays or "operas" are in every way negligible, but his two pamphlets as reprinted by Dr. Nicholson are vastly diverting. They display, to be sure, an undisciplined taste, but this cannot weigh against the immense gusto and the shrewd wit manifested on every page. His *Brief Supplement*, consisting of descriptions of various famous actors and actresses of his day, contains many discerning comments on their art, showing that Tony knew good acting when he saw it; and his extremely frank, unidealized portraits of face and form make genuine flesh and blood people of his subjects. This pamphlet is one of the most human things ever written about the theatre. It is good to have such documents reproduced in accessible form—but it is not well to overlook the investigations of one's predecessors.

ORAL SUMNER COAD.

Columbia University.

³ Ashton died about the middle of the century, though the exact year is not known.